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TO THE

KINGS

MOST

Excellent Majesty.

THE

DUE ACCOUNT

AND

Humble Petition

OF THE

MINISTERS of the GOSPEL,

Lately Commissioned for the REVIEW
and ALTERATION

OF THE

LYTURGY:

London, Printed *Anno Domini*, 1661.

532 **Liturgy.**—A Tryall of the English Liturgie, wherein all the Materiall Objections raised in Defence hereof are fully Cleared and Answered, 4to, *half morocco neat*, 9s 1643

533 ——— The Old Non-Conformist touching the Book of Common Prayer and Ceremonies, 4to, *half morocco neat*, 8s 6d 1660

534 ——— To the King's Majesty, the due Account and Humble Petition of the Ministers of the Gospel, lately Commissioned for the Review and Alteration of the Liturgy, 4to, *half mor. neat*, 9s 1661

TO THE

KINGS

Moſt Excellent

MAJESTY.

May it pleaſe Your Majeſty,

WHen the diſtempered Nation, wearied with its own Contentions and Diviſions, did groan for Unity and Peace, (the wonderful Providence of the moſt Righteous God appearing for the removal of Impediments) their eyes were upon your Majeſty, as the perſon born to be (under God) the Center of their Concord; and taught by Affliction to break the bonds of the Afflicted, and by experience of the ſad effects of mens uncharitableneſs, and paſſions, to reſtrain all from violence and extremity, and keep up moderation and mediocrity, the Oyl of Charity and Peace: And when your ſubjects deſires were accompliſhed in your Majeſties peaceable poſſeſſion of the Throne, it was the joy and encouragement of the Sober and Religious, that you began the exerciſe of your Government, with a Proclamation full of Chriſtian Zeal againſt Debauchery and Prophaneneſs, declaring alſo your diſlike of [thoſe who under pretence of Affection to your Majeſty, and your Service, aſſume to themſelves the liberty of reviling, threat-

ning, and reproaching others, to prevent the Reconciliation and Union of hearts and affections, which can onely (with God's bleſſing) make us rejoyce in each other] Our Comforts alſo were carried on by your Majeſties early, and ready Eutertainment of Motions for Accommodation in thoſe points of Diſcipline and Worſhip, in which we diſagreed, and your profeſſed Reſolutions to draw us together by mutual approaches, and publiſhing your healing *Declaration*, which was received with Thanks of your Houſe of Commons, and the Applauſe of the People, and the ſpecial Joy of thoſe that longed for Concord and Tranquillity in the Church. In which your Majeſty declared ſo much ſatisfaction in the Foundations of Agreement already laid, for that you [ſhould think your ſelf very unfortunate, and ſuſpect that you are defective in the Adminiſtration of Government, if any Superſtructures ſhould ſlack thoſe Foundations, and contract or leſſen the bleſſed gift of Charity, which is a vital part of Chriſtian Religion.]

And as to the ſaid *gracious Declaration*, your Majeſty reſolved to [appoint an equal number of Learned Divines of both Perſwaſions, to Review the *Lyturgie*, and make ſuch Alterations as ſhall be thought moſt neceſſary, and ſome Additional Forms of Scripture-phraſe, as near as may be, ſuited unto the nature of ſeveral parts of Worſhip, and that it be left to the Miniſters choice to uſe one, or other, at his diſcretion:] So, in accompliſhment thereof, your Majeſty, among others, directed your Commiſſion to be for the Review of [the ſeveral Directions, Rules, and Forms of Prayer, and things in the ſaid Book of *Common-Prayer* contained] And (if occaſion be) to make ſuch ſeaſonable and neceſſary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments thereof, as by and between us ſhall be agreed upon to be needful, or expedient, for the giving a ſatisfaction to *tender Conſciences*, and reſtoring and continuance of *Peace* and *Unity* in the Church, under your Protection and Government; and what we agree upon, as needful or expedient to be done for the Altering, Diminiſhing, or Enlarging the ſaid Book of *Common-Prayer*, forthwith to certifie and preſent it in writing to your Majeſty.

In obedience to this your Majeſties Commiſſion, we did with the Right Reverend Biſhops, who required of us, that before any perſonal debate; we ſhould bring in writing all our Exceptions againſt the Book of *Common-Prayer*, and all the Additional Forms which we deſired; Both which we performed, and received from them an Anſwer to the firſt, and returned them our full Reply; The laſt week of our time being deſigned to perſonal Conference, was, at the will of the Right Reverend Biſhops, ſpent in a particular Diſpute with three of each part, about the ſinfulneſs of one of the Injunctions, from which we deſired to be free, and in ſome other Conference on the By. And although the Account which we are forced to give to your Majeſty of the iſſue of our Conſultations, is, That no Arguments are ſubſcribed by us to be offered to your Majeſty according to your expectation; and though it be none of our intent to caſt the leaſt unmeet reflections upon the Right Reverend Biſhops, and Learned Brethren, who think not meet to yeeld to any conſiderable Alterations, to the Ends expreſſed in your Majeſties Commiſſion; yet we muſt ſay, that it is ſome quiet to our minds, that we have not been guilty of your Majeſties, and your Subjects diſappointments, and that we account not your Majeſties Gracious Commiſſion, and our labour loſt, having Peace of Conſcience in the diſcharge of our Duty to God and You, that we have been the ſeekers and followers of Peace, and have earneſtly Pleaded, and humbly Petitioned for it. And we humbly beſeech your Majeſty, to believe that we own no Principles of Faction or Diſobedience, nor patronize the Errors or Obſtinacy of any.

It's granted us by all, That nothing ſhould be commanded us by Man, which is contrary to the Word of God; that if it be, and we know it, we are bound to perform it, God being the Abſolute Univerſall Soveraign; That we muſt uſe all juſt means to diſcern the Will of God, and whether the Commands of Men be contrary to it; that if the Command be ſinfull, and any through the Neglect of ſufficient Search, ſhall judge it lawfull; his culpable Errour excuſeth not his doing it, from being ſin; And therefore as a reaſonable creature muſt needs have a Judgment of diſcerning, that he may rationally

rationally obey it; ſo is he with the greateſt care and diligence to exerciſe it in the greateſt things, even in the obeying of God, and ſaving of his Soul; and that where a ſtrong probability of great ſin and danger lyeth before us, we muſt not raſhly run on without ſearch, and that to go on againſt Conſcience, even where it is miſtaken, is ſin and danger to him that erreth. And on the other ſide, we are remembred, that in things no way againſt the Laws of God, the Commands of our Governours muſt be obeyed; but if they command what God forbids, we muſt patiently ſubmit to ſuffering, and every ſoul muſt be ſubject to the higher Powers, for conſcience ſake, and not reſiſt: The publick Judgement, Civil, or Eccleſiaſtical, belongeth only to publick perſons, and not to any private man; that no man muſt be cauſeleſly, and pragmatically inquiſitive into the Reaſons of his Superiours Commands; nor by pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs, exalt his own underſtanding above it's worth and office, but all to be modeſtly, and humbly ſelf-ſuſpicious; that none muſt erroniouſly pretend to Gods Law, againſt the juſt Command of his Superiours, nor pretend the doing of his duty to be ſin; that he who ſuſpecteth his Superiours Commands to be againſt Gods Law, muſt uſe all means for full Information, before he ſettle in a courſe of diſobeying them; and that he who indeed diſcovereth any thing commanded to be ſin, though he muſt not do it, muſt manage his opinion with very great tenderneſs and care of the publick Peace, and the honours of his Governours: Theſe are our Principles: If we are otherwiſe repreſented to your Majeſty, we are miſ-repreſented; If we are accuſed of contradicting them, we humbly crave that we may not be condemned, till we be heard.

It is the deſire of our Souls to contribute our parts and intereſts to the utmoſt, for the promoting of holineſs, charity, unity, and obedience to Rulers in all lawful things: But if we ſhould ſin againſt God, becauſe we are commanded, who ſhall anſwer for us, or ſave us from his Juſtice? And we humbly crave, that it may be no juſt *Gravamen* of our diſſent, that thereby we ſuppoſe Superiours may erre, ſeeing it is but ſuppoſing them to be men not yet in Heaven; and this

this may be reputed to every one that differeth in opinion from another. And we beſeech your Majeſty to beleeve, that as we ſeek no greater matters in the World than daily Bread, with liberty to Preach the Goſpel, and Worſhip God according to his Word, and the practice of the Primitive Churches; ſo we hope it is not through Puſillanimity, and over much tenderneſs of ſuffering, that we have pleaded ſo much for the avoiding of ſuffering, to our ſelves or others. May none of our ſufferings hinder the proſperity of the Church, and the good of Souls, and we have enough. And we ſuppoſe thoſe that think the perſons inconſiderable in Number and Quality for whom we plead, will not themſelves believe that we have done this for popular applauſe: this were not ſo much to ſeek the reward of Hypocrites, as to play the game of Fools; ſeeing the applauſe of inconſiderable men can be but inconſiderable, and we know our ſelves that we are like thus to offend thoſe that are not inconſiderable; the Lord that ſearcheth hearts, doth know that it is not ſo much the avoiding of ſuffering to our ſelves, or any particular perſon, that is the end of our endeavours (though this were no Ambitious end) as the peace and welfare of the Church and Kingdome, under your Majeſties Government. We know, that ſuppoſing them who are for the Ceremonies, to be as Pious and Charitable as the reſt, it cannot ſo much offend them that another may forbear them, as it muſt offend another to be forced to uſe them; and we know that conſcientious men will not conſent to the practiſing of things in their judgement unlawful, when thoſe may yeeld that count the matter indifferent. And for the management of this Treaty, it being agreed at our firſt meeting that nothing be reported as the words or ſenſe of either part, but what is delivered by them in writing; We humbly crave that your Majeſty receive no more as ours, and that what is charged on any particular perſon, he may be anſwerable for himſelf; and though the Reverend Biſhops have not had time to conſider our Additions to the Lyturgy, and of our Reply, that yet it may be conſidered before a Determination be made. And though we ſeem to have laboured in vain, we ſhall yet lay this work of Reconciliation and Peace at your

Majeſties

Majeſties feet, beſeeching you to proſper ſuch a bleſſed Reſolution, till it attain ſucceſs: We muſt needs beleeve, that when your Majeſty took our Conſent to a Lyturgy to be a foundation that would infer our Concord, you meant not that we ſhould have no Concord, but by conſenting to this Lyturgy, without any conſiderable Alterations.

And when you comforted us with your Reſolutions to draw us together, by yeelding on both ſides in what we could, you meant not that we ſhould be the boat to lay the banks that ſhould not ſtir; and when your Majeſty commanded us by Letters Patents to meet about ſuch Alterations as are needful or expedient for giving ſatisfaction to tender Conſciences, and the reſtoring and continuing of Peace and Unity, we reſt aſſured, that it was not your ſenſe that thoſe tender conſciences were to be forced to practice all which they judged unlawful, and not ſo much as a Ceremony abated them; or that our Treaty was only to convert either party to the Opinion of another; and that all our hopes of Concord and Liberty conſiſted only in diſputing the Biſhops into Non-conformity, or coming in every Ceremony to their minds.

Finally (for your Majeſty, under God, is the protection whereto your people flye, and as the ſame neceſſity ſtill remains which drew forth your Gracious Declaration) we moſt Humbly and Earneſtly beſeech your Majeſty, that the benefit of the ſaid Declaration may be continued to your people, and in particular, that none be puniſhed or troubled for not uſing the Common-Prayer, till it be effectually reformed, and the Addition made, as there expreſt. We crave your Majeſties Pardon for the tediouſneſs of this Addreſs, and ſhall wait in hope, that ſo great a Calamity of your people as will follow the loſs of ſo many able, faithful Miniſters, as the rigorous Impoſition would caſt out, ſhall never be recorded in the Hiſtory of your Reign, but that theſe impediments of Concord being forborn, your Kingdom may flouriſh in Piety and Peace, that this may be the ſignal honour of your happy Reign, and your joy in the day of your account, which is the Prayer of

Your Majeſties Faithful and Obedient Subjects.